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'Drive-by' cryptomining code was discovered in YouTube ads this week



By Polycount · 12 replies

Jan 27, 2018

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"Cryptojacking" is nothing new but it has begun to pick up more steam in [recent months](#). For the unaware, [cryptojacking](#) typically involves unscrupulous website owners or advertisers

using JavaScript code to take advantage of a website visitor's CPU power to mine cryptocurrency in the background, without their knowledge or consent.

The Pirate Bay [was one of the first websites](#) of note to contain this sort of code but its use has only become more common over time. Indeed, the problem has become so pervasive in certain parts of the internet that web browsers such as [Opera](#) have [received new features](#) specifically designed to mitigate or eliminate these issues -- usually in the form of ad blocking filters.

While simply avoiding sketchy sites to begin with might seem like the obvious solution, the issue becomes more complicated when this code starts to appear on bigger, more well-known sites like [Showtime](#) or even [YouTube](#).

This past week YouTuber viewers' antivirus programs began to alert them to the presence of cryptocurrency mining code throughout the website this week, specifically within YouTube's advertising code. Naturally, this led to some users hopping on Twitter to voice their concerns.



Diego Betto

@diegobetto

Hey [@avast_antivirus](#) seems that you are blocking crypto miners ([#coinhive](#)) in [@YouTube #ads](#)

Thank you :)diegobetto.com/crypto-miner-c...

11:40 PM - Jan 25, 2018

Crypto Miner (Coinhive) in YouTube Ads | Diego Betto

During normal browsing on YouTube, at some point, the antivirus Avast reported something that was not good. From the Chrome diegobetto.com

106 104 people are talking about this

Great now my browser everytime I watch youtube... my anti virus always blocking coinhive because malware . Idk much about it but this is getting annoying and I need a solution please T n T

— Arung (@ArungLaksmana) January 23, 2018

Researchers from antivirus company Trend Micro [said](#) these ads resulted in "more than a three-fold spike" in web miner detection stats. The company also said the individuals behind the ads seemed to be targeting YouTube visitors in specific countries, such as France, Taiwan, Italy, Spain and Japan.

"YouTube was likely targeted because users are typically on the site for an extended period of time," security researcher Troy Mursch said in a statement. "This is a prime target for cryptojacking malware, because the longer the users are mining for cryptocurrency the more money is made."

This may not seem like a significant issue but background miners can hog quite a bit of a given system's computing power if left unchecked, as much as 80 percent according to Trend Micro.

Google issued the following statement on the matter:

Mining cryptocurrency through ads is a relatively new form of abuse that violates our policies and one that we've been monitoring actively. We enforce our policies through a multi-layered detection system across our platforms which we update as new threats emerge. In this case, the ads were blocked in less than two hours and the malicious actors were quickly removed from our platforms.

As Ars [noted](#), evidence supplied by Trend Micro seems to contradict Google's statement. The antivirus company has shown several examples of these ads being in place for the better part of a week, which is certainly longer than the two hours Google claims it took to shut the scheme down.

[Permalink to story.](#)

<https://www.techspot.com/news/72973-drive-cryptomining-code-discovered-youtubes-ad-system-week.html>

Jan 27, 2018

#1

I demand YouTube send me another 1080ti for this gross negligence in advertising security.

**davislane1**

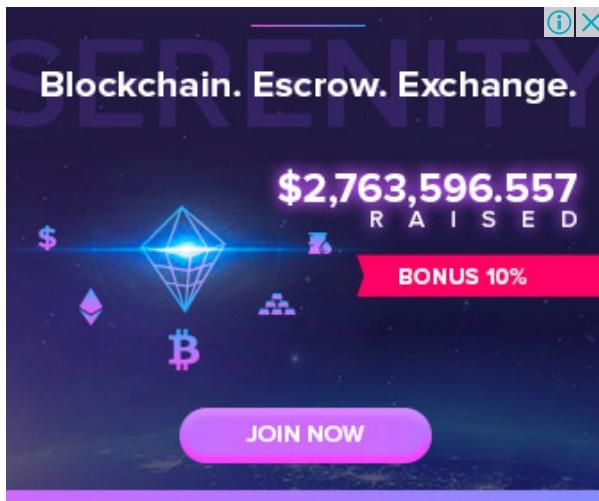
TS Grand Inquisitor

Posts: 4,829 +3,840 ⚡

SirChocula, Reehahs and JaredTheDragon like this.

Jan 27, 2018

#2

**Polycount**

TS Maniac

Topic Starter

Posts: 471 +145

davislane1 said: ↑

I demand YouTube send me another 1080ti for this gross negligence in advertising security.

They probably can't afford the \$1500 it would cost to buy one.

Reehahs and davislane1 like this.

Jan 27, 2018

#3

**davislane1**

TS Grand Inquisitor

Posts: 4,829 +3,840 ⚡

Polycount said: ↑

They probably can't afford the \$1500 it would cost to buy one.

All they have to do is demand content creators with more than 2 fork one over or face further demonetization. They'll comply.

Jan 27, 2018

#4



QuantumPhysics

TS Addict

Posts: 177 +104

I don't leave my computer running long enough to help them use it.

Jan 27, 2018

#5



captaincranky

TechSpot Addict

Posts: 13,293 +2,869

I'm running an Intel G-41 board with the stock IGP. I'm wondering how much mining could this rig accomplish?

Last edited: Jan 27, 2018

Jan 27, 2018

#6



alabama man

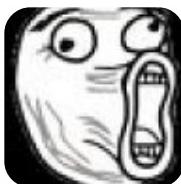
TS Guru

Posts: 408 +262

Ads have no benefit to anyone and they seem to be harmful as well. Maybe it's time to ban all ads. Or at least make them text based and limited to 20 letters; product name and what it does. And make lying illegal, that would fix most problems. You can use science to prove stuff if not your product is based on a lie.

Jan 27, 2018

#7



psycros

TS Evangelist

Posts: 1,930 +1,370

davislane1 said: ↑

Polycount said: ↑

They probably can't afford the \$1500 it would cost to buy one.

All they have to do is demand content creators with more than 2 fork one over or face further demonetization. They'll comply.

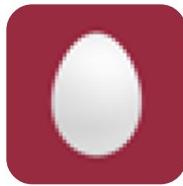
3/4/2018

'Drive-by' cryptomining code was discovered in YouTube ads this week - TechSpot Forums

And by "content creators" you mean miners.

Jan 28, 2018

#8



Evernessince
TS Evangelist
Posts: 2,268 +1,386

davislane1 said: ↑

I demand YouTube send me another 1080ti for this gross negligence in advertising security.

I think there would be more consequences to you going against google for it to be worth it. They own so much now and they have so much money anything but a class action is just going to get snuffed out by their lawyers. Even then that doesn't stop them from banning you from google services.

Jan 28, 2018

#9



Potato Judge
TS Enthusiast
Posts: 91 +31

Lol.. People will do anything to get a piece of that mining pie.

Jan 28, 2018

#10



Icysoul
TS Enthusiast
Posts: 36 +13

captaincranky said: ↑

I'm running an Intel G-41 board with the stock IGP. I'm wondering how much mining could this rig accomplish?

For now, this malicious ads are using the CPU for mining, not the graphics card.

Jan 28, 2018

#11

**captaincranky**

TechSpot Addict

Posts: 13,293 +2,869

Icysoul said: ↑

For now, this malicious ads are using the CPU for mining, not the graphics card.

Well, with an ancient Pentium Dual Core E-6300 in this "beast", I don't think I have too much to worry about in that department either.

While I was being a bit whimsical about my graphics card's memory bandwidth, you bring up a fair point. All I have to do is, listen for the CPU fan to speed up, and / or, leave Task manager running throughout my online activities to see what's going on.

Even so, were this machine to be attacked, you couldn't get a nickel's worth of Bitcoin out of it, even if I stayed on the site for a month and a half.

But, this issue does pose the question as to whether or not, "coinhive", is detectable as a running process?

Last edited: Jan 28, 2018

Jan 28, 2018

#12



Its probably gagme that put the cryptominers in the ads in there in the first place.

wiyosaya

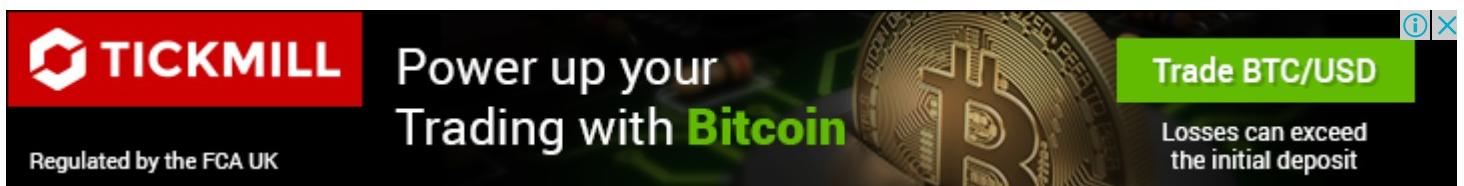
TS Evangelist

Posts: 2,163 +931

Jan 29, 2018

#13

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